

VZCZCXRO6510
OO RUEHDU RUEHMR RUEHPA RUEHRN RUEHTRO
DE RUEHDS #0076/01 0141209
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 141209Z JAN 09
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3368
INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE
RUEPADJ/CJTF HOA
RUZEFAA/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 7662

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ADDIS ABABA 000076

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/FO, AF/RSA, AF/E, AF/W, AF/C, AF/S, AF/SPG AND
NEA/MAG

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/13/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [AU](#)

SUBJECT: USAU: US INTERESTS AT STAKE AT ADDIS AU SUMMIT,
JAN. 26-FEB. 3

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JOHN A. SIMON, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The African Union Summit in Addis Ababa from January 26 through February 3 presents an opportunity to advance US interests or see them take significant steps backward. The crises in Zimbabwe, Somalia, Sudan, Mauritania, Guinea, and Eastern Congo will all likely be items of discussion and backroom wheeling and dealing. Preparation with key players at the Summit should begin shortly. End Summary.

¶2. (U) The bi-annual summit of the African Union (AU) begins January 26 with a two-day meeting of the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC), followed by a two-day meeting of foreign ministers from January 29-30, followed by the heads of state meeting in the Assembly of the Union from February 1-3. The earlier meetings will develop reports and recommendations for the meeting of the Assembly, as well as endorse a number of protocols and proposals developed through the previous year. The heads of state usually accept those recommendations as presented.

¶3. (SBU) The official theme of the summit is infrastructure. The global financial crisis will be a major issue on the agenda and one day will be devoted to the issues of union government (a Libyan initiative), but the major crises on the continent are likely to be the primary topics of discussion and attention at the Summit. At issue will be whether the AU will take a more active role in Zimbabwe, whether members will commit more support to the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and how much pressure the AU will exert to restore constitutional order in Mauritania and Guinea. The impending International Criminal Court decision concerning Sudanese President Bashir, Sudan's still-unresolved Darfur crisis, and the ongoing conflict in Eastern Congo are also likely to generate debate.

Zimbabwe

¶4. (C) The AU has been restrained in its approach to the crisis in Zimbabwe by the decision at its last Summit in Sharm El-Sheikh to delegate mediation of the crisis to the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). Yet the impotence of SADC to resolve the issue is clearly an embarrassment to some members. In November, Deputy Chairperson of the Commission Erastus Mwencha said that if the crisis remained an issue by the time of the Summit, the members will tear him [Mugabe] apart. However, this is not a universal view. Peace and Security Commissioner

Ramtane Lamamra has voiced frustration, apparently shared by other members, with the MDC and its unwillingness to accept the power sharing agreement as is. And the Algerian Ambassador, the current chair of the Peace and Security Council (PSC), recently dismissed the crisis as a Q political disputeQ when asked if the PSC would address the issue during AlgeriaQs chairmanship. QThere are political disputes all over Africa,Q he said. QShould the AU intervene in each one?Q (Comment: With such a wide divergence in views, the Summit debate could just as easily result in a reaffirmation of SADCQs role and approach as a condemnation of Mugabe and a more active role for the AU. On the one hand, many member states are impatient with Zimbabwe; on the other hand, many are reticent to criticize an elder statesman. End Comment.)

15. (C) On January 13, Deputy Chairperson Mwencha met with SADC officials to discuss ways to push forward a resolution, largely to diffuse the issue before the Summit. The focus of these efforts appears to be on gaining passage of Amendment 19 and a commitment of MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai to join the government before the Summit. In a conversation with the Ambassador on January 14, Mwencha said the discussion had included the idea of leaving the issue of control of the Home Affairs ministry to be decided at a later date. Mwencha said a joint AU-SADC team will go to Zimbabwe before the Summit to push the process along. Ambassador cautioned that a settlement will do little to resolve the crisis if it does not include credible power-sharing with the MDC, and the United States, among others, had lost confidence that such a credible

ADDIS ABAB 00000076 002 OF 003

agreement is possible if President Mugabe remains as the head of state.

Somalia

16. (U) The AU Commission and the PSC have regularly called for a UN Peacekeeping Operation in Somalia, with limited effect. However, a strong statement from the assembled heads of state of Africa may carry more weight with the UNSC members. The AU Summit is also an opportunity to raise the final three battalions required to bring AMISOM to full strength. Burkina Faso and Ghana have very recently expressed interest in contributing troops.

17. (C) At the Summit, the AMISOM troop contributing countries as well as the Ethiopian hosts may raise issues concerning the future of AMISOM. For instance, they may question that if reinforcements are not forthcoming and if the UN does not commit to a UNPKO operation, whether the focus should be on removing AMISOM forces. After Ethiopian forces depart Somalia, Ethiopian military officials stated that AMISOM would face great difficulties if they are not reinforced and do not have access to logistical support. In such a scenario, the Ethiopians suggested that naval forces, like CTF 150 or U.S. naval assets, could secure Mogadishu to allow the safe and secure exit of AMISOM forces, should that become necessary. Further, the status of the TFG in the wake of YusufQs resignation and progress on implementation of the Djibouti Accord may well be debated, and the IGAD member states have well-defined positions.

Sudan

18. (C) The potential ICC indictment of President Bashir may result in the AU seeking to reiterate its strong call for an Article 16 deferment. This had been a major issue at the AU for some months, but our AU interlocutors now seem to accept the unlikelihood of such a deferment. When AU

Assembly President Kikwete was at the AU in November, he indicated in discussions with AFRICOM Commander General Ward that Bashir had made concessions in the face of the indictment, which the Darfur rebels had been unable to match due to their fragmented nature. (Comment: It is unlikely the AU "official" position on the ICC indictment will change, and even more unlikely AU member states will cease to see it as a threat that particularly targets Africa. End Comment.)

¶9. (SBU) One area with regard to Sudan where the AU could be helpful is to urge the UN to fully accept the US airlift support required to get UNAMID equipment into Sudan as quickly as possible. At the moment, the UN has sought to limit use of US assets in favor of its own contractors, which they believe are less expensive, if slower. The AU could also issue a strong call for both sides to fulfill their commitments to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and for the GOS to follow through on its own Sudan People's Initiative commitments.

Mauritania

¶10. (C) Per the PSC Ministerial of December 22, the AU-sponsored sanctions are scheduled to take effect shortly after the Summit on February 5, if constitutional order is not restored. In a January 8 discussion, Lamamra has noted that while the recently concluded junta-sponsored National Dialogue on Democracy seemed to harm the junta by alienating the opposition party, the fact that it set a date for elections (May 30) could convince some AU members to ease pressure on the junta. He suggested maintaining the AU's firm stance may not be easy.

¶11. (C) Another issue for the Summit regarding Mauritania is whether legitimate President Abdallahi Sidi will be invited to take Mauritania's seat in the Assembly, as the Commission recommended to the December 22 PSC Ministerial.

ADDIS ABABA 00000076 003 OF 003

Lamamra thought the issue could be presented by the foreign ministers to the Assembly, but it could only be decided once the Assembly meets. While he would not hazard a guess on how likely it would be for the Assembly to seat President Sidi or his representative, he noted that at the ministerial, after much discussion, Sidi's representative was allowed to address the meeting in the name of Mauritania. (FYI: The June AU Summit seated Zimbabwe's President Mugabe, while Tsvangirai was prohibited from traveling by Mugabe. End FYI.)

Guinea

¶12. (SBU) Lamamra indicated that whatever is decided on Mauritania is likely to impact the AU's deliberations on Guinea, since the AU will want to appear to have a common approach to coups d'état. He noted two critical differences between the two that could come into play: 1) Guinea does not have a living legitimate President contesting the coup; and 2) the coup leaders in Guinea have claimed thus far that they intend to give up power completely. Ambassador agreed that whether the coup leaders benefit from the illegal action they have taken should be a major factor in determining the acceptability of any proposed settlement.

¶13. (U) The decision by ECOWAS on January 10 to suspend Guinea from the regional organization until the military junta holds elections and restores constitutional order exposed a rift among AU member states. Senegal President Abdoulaye Wade expressed willingness to work with the junta and his objection to the ECOWAS decision to suspend

Guinea could presage a lively debate over a fundamental AU principle.

Eastern Congo

¶14. (U) Prior to the start of the Assembly, there will be a Qmini-SummitQ on January 31 on the situation in the Eastern Congo attended by the heads of state of the Great Lakes region. UN Mediator Olusegun Obasanjo and AU Mediator Benjamin Mkapa will report on the progress of the current talks. Mwencha did not indicate what the expectations of the meeting were beyond supporting the efforts of Obasanjo and Mkapa.

Comment:

¶15. (C) The AU Summit will have a very important impact on issues critical to US Africa policy. Achieving US objectives will require vigorous diplomacy, both before and at the Summit, including during the PRC and foreign ministersQ meetings that occur in advance of the Assembly. We look to Washington to provide the Q messagingQ to be conveyed prior to and during the AU summit. We also suggest Washington consider outreach to key AU members, including Tanzania (the current chair of the AU Assembly), Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Nigeria, South Africa, and other leaders of the eight AU-recognized regional economic communities. We request copies of the briefing papers being prepared by the appropriate Embassies and offices on the core subjects that will be raised at the summit Q Zimbabwe, Somalia, Sudan, Mauritania, Guinea and Eastern Congo.
YAMAMOTO